

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claim Status

Claims 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 25-27 and 31-34 were previously presented. Claims 31 and 34 are canceled without prejudice. Thus, claims 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 25-27, 32 and 33 are now pending.

Allowed Claims

The allowance of claims 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 25-27, 32 and 33 is noted and appreciated.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103


Claim 31 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Nishimo (JP 401311744) in view of Irube (US 6,377,818) and Rao (US 5,896,165). Claim 34 is rejected as obvious over Nishimo in view of Irube, Rao and Sato (JP 406296277). In response, claims 31 and 34 are canceled without prejudice, rendering these grounds for rejection moot.

Conclusion

The foregoing amendments comply with requirements of form and thus may be admitted under 37 CFR. 1.116(b). This application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after consideration and entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

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